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Durham:

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1838.

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THE MAN
WITH THE IRON MASK.

THE man with the Iron Mask was a remarkable personage, who existed as a state prisoner in France during the latter part of the 17th century. As the circumstances of this person form a historical problem, which has occasioned much inquiry, and given rise to many conjectures, and excited in a particular manner the curiosity of the public, it shall be endeavoured to condense in this little work the substance of every thing material that has been published on the subject. We shall first relate such particulars concerning this extraordinary prisoner as appears to be well authenticated: and shall afterwards mention the different opinions and conjectures that have been entertained with regard to his real quality, and the causes of his confinement.

1st. The authenticated particulars concerning the Iron Mask are as follow:—A few months after the death of Cardinal Mazarine, there arrived at the Isle of St. Marguerite, in the see of Provence, a young prisoner, whose appearance was peculiarly attracting; his person was above the middle size, and elegantly formed; his mien and deportment were noble, and his manners graceful;—even the sound of his voice, it is said, had in it something uncommonly interesting. On the road he constantly wore a mask with iron springs, to enable him to eat without taking it off. It was at first believed that his mask was made entirely of iron, whence he acquired the name of the Man with the Iron Mask: his attendant had received orders to despatch him if he attempted to take off his mask, or discover himself. He had been first confined in Pignerol, under the govern-

ment of M. de St. Mars, and been sent from thence to St. Marguerite. He was accompanied thither by the same person who continued to have the charge of him. He was always treated with the most marked respect. He was constantly served in plate, and the governor himself placed his dishes on the table, retiring immediately after and locking the door behind him. He *tu-to-yoit* (thee-ed and thou-ed). The governor, on the other hand, behaved to him in the most respectful manner, and never wore his hat before him, nor sat down in his presence, unless he was desired. The Marquis de Louvoisis, who went to see him at St. Marguerite, spoke to him standing, and with that kind of attention that denotes high respect.

During his residence here, he attempted twice, in an indirect manner, to make himself known. One day he wrote something with his knife on a plate and threw it out of a window towards a boat which was drawn on shore at the foot of a tower. A fisherman picked it up, and carried it to the governor, M. de St. Mars, who was alarmed, and asked the man with great anxiety, "Whether he could read, and whether any one else had seen the plate;" the man answered, "that he could not read, that he had but just found the plate, and that no one else had seen it." He was, however, confined, till the governor was well assured of the truth of his assertions. A young man, who lived in the Isle, one day perceived something floating under the prisoner's window; and on picking it up he discovered it to be a very fine shirt written all over. He carried it to the governor; who having looked at some parts of the writing, asked the lad with some appearance of anxiety, "If he had not had the curiosity to read it?" He protested repeatedly that he had not; but two days afterwards he was found dead in his bed.

The *Masque de Fer* remained in this isle till the year 1698, when M. St. Mars, being promoted to the government of the Bastile, conducted his prisoner to that

fortress. In his way thither, he stopped with him at his estate near Paltean. The Masque arrived there in a litter surrounded by a numerous guard on horseback. M. de St. Mars eat at the same table with him all the time they resided at Paltean; but the latter was always placed with his back towards the windows; and the peasants who came to pay their compliments to their master, and whom curiosity kept constantly on the watch, observed that M. de St Mars always sat opposite to him, with two pistols by the side of his plate. They were waited on by one servant only, who brought in and carried out the dishes, always carfully shutting the door both in going out and returning. The prisoner was always masked whenever he passed through the Court, but the people saw his teeth and lips, and also observed that his hair was grey. The governor slept in the same room in a second bed that was placed there on that occasion. In the course of their journey, the Iron Mask was one day heard to ask his keeper whether the king had any design on his life; "No, prince," he replied, "provided that you quietly allow yourself to be conducted, your life is perfectly secure." The stranger was accommodated as well as it was possible in the Bastile. Apartments had been prepared for him by order of the governor before his arrival, fitted up in the most convenient style, and every thing that he expressed or desired was instantly procured him. His table was the best that could be provided; and he was ordered to be supplied with as rich clothes as he desired: but his chief taste, in this last particular, was for lace, and for linen remarkably fine. It appears that he was allowed the use of such books as he desired, and that he spent much of his time in reading. He had liberty of going to mass; but was then strictly forbidden to speak or uncover his face: orders were even given to the soldiers to fire upon him if he attempted either; and their pieces, always pointed towards him as he passed through the court. When

he had occasion to see a surgeon or a physician, he was obliged, under pain of death, constantly to wear his mask. An old physician of the Bastile, who had often attended him when he was indisposed, said "that he never saw his face, though he had frequently examined his tongue, and different parts of his body; that there was something uncommonly interesting in the sound of his voice; and that he never complained of his confinement, nor let fall from him any hint by which it might be guessed who he was." It is said that he often passed the night in walking up and down his room.

This unfortunate Prince died on the 19th of Nov. 1703, after a short illness; and was interred next day in the burying place of the parish of St. Paul. The expense of his funeral amounted only to forty livres. The name given him was Marchiali: and even his age, as well as his real name, it seemed of importance to conceal, for in the register made of his funeral, it was mentioned that he was about forty years old; though he had told his apothecary, some time before his death, that he thought he must be sixty. It is a well known fact, that immediately after the prisoner's death, his apparel, linen, clothes, mattresses, and in short every thing that had been used by him, were burnt; that the walls of his room were scraped, the floor taken up, evidently from the apprehension that he might have found means of writing any thing that would have discovered who he was. Nay, such was the fear of his having left a letter or any mark which might lead to a discovery, that his plate was melted down; the glass was taken out of the window of his room, and pounded to dust; the window frame and doors burnt; and the ceiling of the room, and the plaster of the inside of the chimney taken down. Several persons have affirmed, that the body was buried without a head; and M. de St. Foix informs us, that a gentleman having bribed the sexton, had the body taken up in the night, and found a stone instead of the head.

The result of these extraordinary accounts is, that the Iron Mask was not only a person of high birth, but must have been of great consequence; and that his being concealed was of the utmost importance to the King and ministry. We come now, therefore, to notice—

2d. The opinions and conjectures that have been formed concerning the real name and condition of this remarkable personage. Some have pretended that he was the Duke of Beaufort; others, that he was the Count de Vermandois, natural son to Louis XIV. by the Duchess de la Valliere. Some maintain him to have been the Duke of Monmouth, natural son of Charles II. of England, by Lucy Walters; and others say, that he was Gerolami Magni, minister to the Duke of Modena.

Besides these conjectures, none of which possess sufficient probability to entitle them to consideration, a fifth has been advanced; namely, that the Iron Mask was a son of Anne of Austria, Queen to Louis the XIII. and consequently that he was a brother of Louis XIV., but whether a bastard brother, a brother-german, or a half brother, is a question that has given rise to three several opinions, which we shall state in the order of time, in which the respective transactions to which they allude, happened.

1. The first opinion is that the Queen proved with child at a time when it was evident it could not have been by her husband, who, for some months before, had never been with her in private. The supposed father of this child is said by some to have been the Duke of Buckingham, who came to France in May, 1625, to conduct the Princess Henrietta, wife of Charles I. into England. The private letters and memoirs of those times speak very suspiciously of the Queen and Buckingham: his behaviour at Amiens, whither the Queen and Queen's mother accompanied the Princess in her way to Boulogne, occasioned much whispering: notwithstanding the pains that have been taken by La Porte,

in his memoirs, to excuse his mistress, it appears that the King on this occasion, was extreemly offended at her, and that it required all the influence and address of the Queen's mother to effect a reconciliation. It is said that this child was privately brought up in the country; that when Mazarine became a favourite, he was entrusted with the care of him; and that Louis XIV. having discovered the secret on the death of the Cardinal, thought it necessary to confine him in the manner that has been related.

But it may be observed, that the secret could scarcely have escaped the vigilance of the Cardinal de Richelieu; and it is not improble that a minister so little scrupulous, if inclined to save the honor of a Queen, would have removed a child, who, if he lived, might have been made use of to disturb the tranquillity of the kingdom. After the supposed birth, the Queen had frequent quarrels with the King, and what was more dangerous, with the Cardinal; who even used every means in his power to inquire into her most private transactions. It was on a memorable occasion of this kind, that her servant, La Porte, was thrown into the Bastile; and it can scarcely be imagined she would have had the firmness she then displayed, while conscious of so much guilt, and under the risk of having it discovered. The prisoner with the mask appears, by several accounts, to have been a youth of a handsome figure in the year 1661; and in 1703, when he died, to have been above sixty; but had he been a son of Buckingham, he would have been about thirty-six in 1661, when he could not be said to have been a youth; and in November, 1703, above seventy eight.

2. The second opinion is, that he was the twin brother of Louis XIV. born some hours after him. This first appeared in a short anomyous work, published without date, and without the name of the place or printer. It is therein said, "Louis XIV. was born at

St. Germains en Laye, on the 5th of September, 1638, about noon; and the illustrious prisoner, known by the appellation of the Iron Mask, was born the same day, while Louis XIII. was at supper. The King and the Cardinal, fearing that the pretensions of a twin-brother might one day be employed to renew those civil wars with which France had been so often afflicted, cautiously concealed his birth, and sent him away to be brought up privately. Having but an imperfect knowledge of the circumstances that followed, I shall say nothing more, for fear of committing errors; but I firmly believe the fact I have mentioned; and time will probably prove to my readers, that I have grounds for what I have advanced.

This opinion has been more noticed since the publication of a work called *Memoires de Marechal Duc de Richelieu*, written by the Abbe Soulavie; concerning which it may be proper to premise, that the late Duke of Richlieu, son of the Marechal, disavowed this work; while the Abbe Soulavie, who had been employed by the Marechal, insisted on the authenticity of his papers. He informs us that the Duke of Richlieu was the lover of Madamoiselle de Valois, daughter of the regent Duke of Orleans, and afterwards Duchess of Modena, who in return was passionately fond of him: that the regent had something more than a paternal affection for his daughter; and that though she held his sentiments in abhorrence, the Duke of Richlieu made use of her influence with her father, to discover the secret of the prisoner with the mask: that the regent, who had always observed the most profound silence on this subject, was at last persuaded to entrust her with a manuscript, which she immediately sent to her lover, who took a copy of it. This manuscript is supposed to have been written by a gentleman on his death bed, who had been the governor or early tutor of the prisoner. The following is an extract of it, from what the Abbe Soulavie has told us,

"The unfortunate prince whom I have brought up, and taken care of till the close of my life, was born September the 5th, 1638, at half past eight. His brother the present sovereign, was born in the morning of the same day, about twelve o'clock. But the births of these princes presented a striking contrast, for the eldest's was as splendid and brilliant as the youngest's was melancholy and private.

"The king, soon after the queen was safely delivered of the first prince, was informed by the midwife, that her majesty was still in labour. This intelligence alarmed him greatly, and he ordered the chancellor of France, the first almoner, the queen's confessor, and myself, to remain in her apartment till she was delivered, as he wished us to be witnesses of the steps which he meant to take, if she gave birth to another dauphin; for it had been foretold by some shepherds that the queen was pregnant with two sons; they also reported that they had obtained the knowledge by divine inspiration. This report was soon circulated through Paris, and the people alarmed by it, loudly asserted, that if this prediction should be verified, it would cause the total ruin of the state. The archbishop of Paris was soon informed of these transactions, and after conversing with the shepherds, ordered them to be closely confined in the prison of Lazarus; for the serious effect their prophecy had produced in the minds of the people had given the king some uneasiness, because it made him reflect on the disturbances he had to fear in this kingdom. He informed the cardinal of this prediction, who, in answer said, that the birth of two dauphins was not impossible, and that if the peasants' prophecy should be realized, the last born must be concealed with the greatest care, as he might, when he grew up, conceive that he had a right to the crown, and cause another league in the kingdom.

"During the queen's second labour, which lasted several hours, the king was tormented by his apprehen-

sions, for he felt a strong presentiment, that he should soon be the father of two dauphins. He desired the Bishop of Meaux, not to leave the queen till she was delivered, and afterwards turning to us all, said, sufficiently loud to be heard by the queen, 'that if another dauphin should be born, and any of us should divulge the secret, our heads should answer for it: for,' added he, 'his birth must be a secret of state, to prevent the misfortunes which would evidently follow the disclosure, as the salique law has been silent concerning the inheritance of a kingdom, on a birth of male twins.'

"The event which had been foretold, soon after arrived, for the queen, while the king was at supper, gave birth to a second son much smaller and handsomer than the first; and the poor infant, by his incessant cries, seemed to lament his entrance into a world where so much misery was in store for him. The chancellor then drew up the verbal process of this extraordinary event; but the king not approving of the first, it was burnt in my presence, and it was not till after he had written a great many that his majesty was satisfied. The first almoner endeavoured to persuade the king that he ought not to conceal the birth of a prince; to which his majesty replied, 'that reasons of state absolutely required the most inviolable secresy.'

"The king soon after dictated the oath of secresy, which he desired us all to sign: when this important business was concluded, he sealed the oath to the verbal-process, and took possession of it. The royal infant was then given into the hands of the midwife; but to deter her from revealing the secret of its birth, she was menaced with death if she ever gave the least hint of it; we were all, likewise, strictly charged not even to converse with each other on the subject.

"His majesty dreaded nothing so much as a civil war, and he thought that the dissensions which would certainly occur between the two brothers, if they were brought up as such, would certainly occasion one; the

cardinal, also, when he was invested with the superintendency of the prince's education, did every thing in his power to keep this apprehension alive.

"The king ordered him to examine carefully the poor child's body, to see if he had any marks by which he might hereafter be known, if his brother should die; for the king always proposed, in that case, to put the royal infant in possession of his rights; for this reason, after having made us all sign the verbal-process, he sealed it with the royal seal.

"During the infancy of the young prince, M. Peronnette, the midwife, treated him as if he were her own son, but from her great care and manner of living every one suspected that he was the illegitimate son of a rich nobleman.

"As soon as the prince's infancy was over, Cardinal Mazarin, on whom his education had devolved, consigned him to my care, with orders to educate him in a manner suitable to the dignity of his birth, but in private. M. Peronnette continued to attend him, in my house in Burgundy, till her death; and they were warmly attached to each other.

"I had frequent conversations with the queen during the subsequent disturbances in this kingdom; and her majesty has often said to me, 'that if the prince's birth should be discovered during the life of the young king, his brother, the malcontents would, she feared, take advantage of it to raise a revolt among the people, for, she added, that it was the opinion of many able physicians, that the last born of twins was the first conceived, and of course the eldest.' This fear did not however, prevent the queen from preserving, with the greatest care, the written testimonies of the prince's birth; for she intended, if any accident had befallen his brother, to have recognized him, though she had another son.

"The young prince received as good an education as I could have wished to have received myself in si-

milar circumstances; and a better one than was bestowed on the acknowledged princes.

"When he was about nineteen, his desire to know who he was increased to a great degree, and he tormented me with continual solicitations to make him acquainted with the author of his existence; the more earnest he was, the more resolute were my refusals; and when he saw that his entreaties did not avail, he endeavoured to persuade me that he thought he was my son. Often, when he called me by the tender name of father, did I tell him that he deceived himself; but, at length, seeing that he persevered in this opinion, I ceased to contradict him, and gave him reason to believe that he was really my son. He appeared to credit this, with a view, no doubt, of forcing me by this means to reveal the truth to him; as I afterwards learned that he was at that very time doing all in his power to discover who he was.

"Two years had elapsed in this manner, when an imprudent action, for which I shall ever reproach myself, revealed to him the important secret of his birth. He knew that I had received at that time many expresses from the king; and this circumstance, probably, raised some doubts in his mind, which he sought to clear up by opening my escritoire, in which I imprudently left many letters from the queen and the cardinal. He read them; and their contents, aided by his natural penetration, discovered the whole secret to him.

"I observed about this time that his manners were quite changed, for instead of treating me with that affection and respect which I was accustomed to receive from him, he became surly and reserved. This alteration at first surprised me, but I too soon learnt the cause.

"My suspicions were first roused by his asking me with great earnestness, to procure him the portraits of the late and present king. I told him in answer, that there had been no good resemblance of either drawn yet; and that I would wait till some eminent painter should execute their pictures.

"This reply, which he appeared extremely dissatisfied with, was followed by a request to go to Dijon: the extreme disappointment he expressed on being refused, alarmed me, and from that moment I watched his motions more closely. I afterwards learnt that his motive for wishing to visit Dijon was, to see the king's picture; he had an intention also of going from thence to the court, that was then kept at St. Jean-de-Luz, on account of the marriage with the infanta, to see, and compare himself with his brother.

"The young prince was then extremely beautiful; and he inspired such an affection in the breast of a young chambermaid, that in defiance of the strict orders which all the domestics had received, not to give the prince any thing he required without my permission, she procured him the king's portrait.

"As soon as the unhappy prince glanced his eye on it, he was forcibly struck by his resemblance to himself; and well he might, for one portrait would have served for them both. This sight confirmed all his doubts, and made him furious. He instantly flew to me, exclaiming, in the most violent passion, 'This is the king! and I am his brother: here is an undeniable proof of it." He then showed me a letter from Cardinal Mazarin that he had stolen out of my escritoire, in which his birth was mentioned.

"I now feared that he would contrive means to escape to the court during the celebration of his brother's nuptials; and to prevent this meeting, which I greatly dreaded, I soon after sent a messenger to the king to inform him of the prince's having broken open escritoire; by which means he had discovered the secret of his birth; I also informed him the effect this had produced on his mind. On the receipt of this letter his majesty ordered us both to be imprisoned. The cardinal was charged with this order; and at the same time acquainted the prince, that his improper conduct was the cause of our common misfortune."

This is the historical memoir which the regent delivered to the princess: it does not, indeed, certify, that this prince was the prisoner known by the name of the Iron Mask; but all the foregoing facts agree so well with the extraordinary anecdotes related of this mysterious personage, that it appears beyond contradiction, that this memoir fills up the vacuum relative to the beginning of his life.

This memoir, real or fictitious, concludes with saying, "I have ever since suffered with him in our common prison: I am now summoned to appear before my Judge on high; and for the peace of my soul, I cannot but make this declaration, which may point out to him the means of freeing himself from his present ignominious situation, in case the king his brother should die without children. Can an extorted oath compel me to observe secresy on a thing so incredible, but which ought to be left on record to posterity?"

3d. The third opinion is, that he was a son of the Queen by the Cardinal de Mazarin, born about a year after the death of her husband, Louis XIII. that he was brought up secretly; and that soon after the death of the Cardinal, which happened on the 9th March, 1661, he was sent to Pignerol. To this account, father Griffet objects, "that it was needless to mask a face that was unknown, and therefore that this opinion does not merit discussion." But in answer it has been observed, that the prisoner might strongly resemble Louis XIV. which would be a sufficient reason to have him masked. This opinion is supposed to have been entertained by Voltaire, who asserts his thorough knowledge of the secret, though he declined being altogether explicit. The Abbe Soulavie, author of Memoirs of the Marechal de Richlieu, speaking on this subject, says, "That he once observed to the Marechal that he certainly had the means of being informed who the prisoner was; that it even seemed that he had told Voltaire, who durst not venture

to publish the secret; and that he at last asked him, whether he was not the elder brother of Louis XIV. born without the knowledge of Louis XIII.? That the Marechel seemed embarrassed, but afterwards said, that he was neither the bastard brother of Louis XIV. nor the Duke of Monmouth, nor the Count of Vermandois, nor the Duke of Beaufort, as different authors had advanced; that their conjectures were nothing but reveries: but added, that they, however, had related many circumstances that were true; that in fact the order was given to put the prisoner to death if he discovered himself; and that he finished the conversation by saying, all I can tell you on the subject is, that the prisoner was not of such consequence when he died, at the beginning of the present century, as he had been at the beginning of the reign of Louis XIV. and that he was shut up for important reasons of state." The Abbe Soulavie tells us, "That he wrote down what had been said, and gave it to the Marechal to read who corrected some expressions." The Abbe having proposed some furthur questions, he answered, "Read what Voltaire published last on the subject of the prisoner with the mask, espicially at the end, and reflect on it." The passage of Voltaire alluded to is as follows:

"The *man with the mask*" says he, is an enigma of which every one would guess the meaning. Some have said that it was the Duke of Beaufort; but the Duke of Beaufort was killed by the Turks in the defence of Candy, in 1669, and the prisoner with the mask was at Pignerol in 1671. Besides, how could the Duke of Beaufort have been arrested in the midst of his army, and brought to France, without any one knowing it? and why confine him? and why that mask? others have dreamed that he was the Count de Vermandois, natural son of Louis XIV. who diedd publicly at the army in 1683, of the small pox, and was buried at the little town of Acre, and not Arras, in which father Griffet was mistaken, but in which

to be sure there is no great harm. Others have imagined, that it was the Duke of Monmouth, who was beheaded publicly in London in the year 1685. But for this he must have risen again from the dead, and he must have changed the order of time, and placed the year 1662 in the room of the year 1685. King James, who never forgave any one, and who on that account deserved all that happened to him, must have pardoned the Duke of Monmouth, and got another to die in his stead, who perfectly resembled him. This associate must first have been found, and then he must have had the goodness to let his head be cut off in public, to save the Duke of Monmouth. It was necessary that all England should be mistaken; and that king James should beg of Louis XIV. to be so obliging as to be his gaoler; that Louis XIV. after having shown this trifling piece of civility to king James, should not have been wanting in the same attention to his friend king William and to queen Anne (with both of whom he was engaged in war), and to please them, retained the dignity of gaoler, with which James had honoured him

"All these illusions being dissipated, it then remains to know who the prisoner was, and at what age he died." It is clear, that if he was not permitted to cross the court of the Bastile, or to speak to his physician, except covered with a mask, it must have been from the apprehension that his features and countenance might have discovered some resemblance. He could show his tongue but not his face. He said himself to the apothecary of the Bastile, a few days before his death, that he believed he was about sixty. Mr. Marsoban, who was son-in-law to this apothecary, and surgeon to the Marechal de Richlieu, and afterwards to the regent Duke of Orleans, told me this frequently. Why give him an Italian name? They always called him Marchiali. He who writes this article, perhaps,

knows more than father Griffet; but he will say nothing farther."

This opinion has been lately resumed, illustrated, and enforced, by M. de Saint Mihiel, in a work entitled *Le Veritable Homme*, &c. "The real Man with the Iron Mask." The author, in support of his idea, attempts to prove, that Anne of Austria and Cardinal Mazarin were married. "This," says he "the Duchess of Orleans assures us of in three of her letters." In the first, dated Sept. 13th, 1713, she expresses herself as follows: "Old Beauvais, who was first lady of the bed-chamber to the queen Dowager, was acquainted with the secret of the ridiculous marriage: this rendered it necessary for the queen to do every thing that her confidante wished; and this circumstance has given rise in this country, to an extension of the rights of first lords of the bed-chamber." In the second of these letters, dated November the 2nd, 1717, she says, "the queen-mother, widow of Louis XIII. did worse than love Cardinal Mazarin; she married him, for he was not a priest: he was not even in orders; and who would have hindered her? He was most horribly tired of the good queen-mother, and lived on very bad terms with her; which is the reward that people deserve for entering into such marriages." In her third letter, dated July 2, 1719, speaking of the Queen, the Duchess says, "She was perfectly easy respecting Cardinal Mazarin; he was not a priest, and therefore nothing could prevent their being married. The secret passage through which the Cardinal went every evening to the Queen's apartment, is still to be seen at the Palais Royal." Among other proofs, besides the above, which M. de Mihiel brings to substantiate this marriage, he observes, "that Mazarin held all councils of state in his apartment, whilst he was shaving or dressing; that he never permitted any persons to sit down in his presence; not even the Chancellor, nor Marshal de Villeroi; and that while

they were deliberating with him on state affairs, he would often be playing with his monkey or linnet." "What man," continues the author, "would have subjected to such humiliation—a chancellor who holds the first office in the kingdom, since that of constable has been suppressed; and a marshal who was governor to the King, had he not been in reality a sovereign himself, in virtue of his being husband to the queen regent? He therefore concludes, that the man with the Iron Mask was son to Anne of Austria and Cardinal Mazarin; and endeavours to justify this assertion by a variety of conjectural proofs. Of some of these we shall give a short sketch:—

1. No prince, or person of any consideration, after the year 1644, at which time the man with the Iron Mask was born, until the time when his existence was known, disappeared in France. This personage, therefore, was not a prince or great lord of France known at that time.

2. The man with the iron mask was not a foreigner; for foreigners, even of the highest distinction, did not at that period study the French language in such a manner, as to attain so great perfection in it as to pass for Frenchmen. If this prisoner had spoken with the least foreign accent, the officers, physicians, surgeons, apothecaries, confessors, and others employed in the prisons where he was, and especially the prisoners with whom he conversed at St. Marguerite, would not have failed to discover it. From all this, M. de Mihiel infers, that he must have been a Frenchman.

3. The existence of the man with the iron mask has been known for upwards of ninety years. Had any person of high rank disappeared at an anterior period, his friends, relations, or acquaintances, would not have failed to claim him, or at least to suppose that he was the man concealed by this mask. But no one disappeared, nor was any one claimed: the man with the iron mask was therefore a person unkown.

4. This man was not torn away from society on account of any criminal action; for when he was arrested, it was forseen that he would cause much embarrassment, and occasion great expenses. He was, therefore, not a criminal, else means would have been pursued to get rid of him; and consequently all the importance of his being concealed was attached solely to his person.

5. This stranger must have been a person of very high birth; for the governor of the prison, St. Mars, behaved always to him with the greatest respect.

6. Louis XIII. played on the guitar; Louis XIV. did the same in a very masterly manner; and the man with the iron mask played also on that instrument: which gives us reason to believe that his education was directed by the same persons who had presided over that of Louis XIV. and who appears to have been the particular choice of Anne of Austria.

7. This stranger died on the 19th of November, 1703; and a few days before his death, he told the apothecary of the Bastile, that he was about sixty years of age. Supposing that he was then fifty-nine and a half, he must have been born towards the end of May, 1644; and if he was sixty, wanting three months, he must have been born in the end of August, or the beginning of September, of the same year; a period when the royal authority was in the hands of Anne of Austria, but in reality exercised more by Mazarin than by her. "I have already proved," continues the author, that from the first day of the regency of Anne of Austria, the greatest friendship, and even intimacy, subsisted between this princess and the cardinal; that these sentiments were changed into a mutual love; and that they were afterwards united by the bonds of marriage. They might, therefore, well have a son about the month of September, 1644, as Louis XIII. had been then dead more than fifteen months, having died on the 15th of May, the year preceding. But nothing of what I have related, or of what has been written and

acknowledged as fact, respecting the man with the iron mask, can be applied, except to a son of Mazarin and Anne of Austria. The man with the iron mask was indebted, therefore, for his existence, to Cardinal Mazarin, and the regent widow of Louis XIII. To account for the manner in which the queen was able to conceal her pregnancy and delivery, Madam de Motteville is quoted; who relates under the year 1644, "that Anne of Austria quitted the Louvre, because her apartments there displeased her: that she went to reside at the Palais Royal, which Richlieu, when he died, bequeathed to the deceased king: that when she first occupied this lodging, *she was so dreadfully afflicted with the jaundice*, that the physicians ascribed this disorder to her dejection and application to business, which gave her much embarassment; but that being cured of her melancholy, as well as of her malady, she resolved to think only of enjoying tranquillity; which she did, by committing to her minister the burthen of public affairs. On this quotation, M. de St. Mihiel asks, "Is it not very singular that the queen, who during the twenty-nine years of her former wedded state, had always resided in the Louvre, especially from 1626, when Louis XIII. ceased to cohabit with her; until their re-union, which took place in the beginning of December, 1637, should have quitted it precisely in 1644, because she was displeased with her apartments? How happened it that her apartments displeased her this year, and neither sooner nor later; she might undoubtedly have had any kind of furniture there which she desired, and every alteration made according to her wishes, as she was then absolute mistress: but the cause of her determination is plain; the apartments of the Palais Royal, which front a garden, were much more convenient for her to be delivered in secret.

8. As it is necessary that some name should be given to every man in order to distinguish him from another, that of *Marchiali* was given to the man with the iron

mask; a name which evidently shows that it had been invented by an Italian. (Cardinal Mazarin was a native of Piscina in the Ambruzzo.)

9. Anne of Austria was remarkably delicate respecting every thing that touched her person. It was with great difficulty that cambric could be found fine enough to make shifts and shirts for her. Cardinal Mazarin once rallying her on this subject, said, "*That if she should be damned, her punishment in hell would be to sleep in Holland sheets.*" The predominant taste of the man with the iron mask, was to have lace and linen of the most extraordinary fineness. "Who," says the author, does not perceive, in this similarity of tastes the maternal tenderness of Anne of Austria? who would have thought her son a great sufferer, had he not been indulged in fine linen?

"Louis XIII. (continues M. de St. Mihiel) was a husband of a gloomy disposition, and an enemy to pleasure: while the Queen, on the contrary, was fond of social life; she introduced at the court of France, especially after she became free, that ease and politeness which distinguished it under Louis XIV. from all the other courts of Europe. Louis XIII. had also a disagreeable countenance, and a breath so offensive, that it was a punishment for Richlieu to remain near him. It is clear, therefore, that she could not be much pleased with such a husband. When she became regent of the kingdom by the king's death, which happened on the 14th of May, 1643, as she had not enjoyed that happiness, which arises from a close union of hearts, it will not appear extraordinary that she should indulge the affection she entertained for Cardinal Mazarin, and that she should marry him. Every circumstance that could tend to favour such a marriage, will be found united in her situation. She was at a distance from her family; absolute mistress of all her actions; and had besides, a heart formed for love. Mazarin, though a Cardinal, had never entered into orders; he gave

out that he was descended from a great family; he was handsome and well made; he was of a mild, insinuating disposition, and remarkably engaging in conversation; and his office, as prime minister, afforded him every opportunity of visiting and conversing with the Queen, whenever he thought proper. Is it, therefore, so very astonishing, that, with so many advantages, he was able to captivate the Queen so far as to induce her to marry him? Such a marriage was not indeed according to the usual course of things; yet, it was not without many precedents, particularly among sovereigns of the other sex, who had given their hands to persons of inferior rank. Thus, Christian IV. of Denmark, espoused Christina Monck; Frederick IV. espoused Mademoiselle Rewentlaw; James II. heir to the throne of England, married the daughter of a Counsellor; Peter the Great raised to the throne of Catherine 1st. the daughter of a poor villager, yet perhaps the most accomplished at that time between the Vistula and the Pole; and Louis XIV. espoused the widow of a poet, but a woman possessed of the most extraordinary merit. As the women, however, are not forgiving so readily as the men for entering into such marriages; Anne of Austria kept hers a secret from this motive, and because she would have been in danger of losing the regency of the kingdom had it been known.

The reasoning of M. de St. Mihiel is both ingenious and plausible; though the probability of the account is somewhat diminished, by considering what must have been the Queen's age at this period, after she had been Louis's wife for twenty-nine years before his death. The account immediately preceding, without this objection, seems abundantly credible. But whether upon the whole, either of them can be received as decisive, or whether the mystery of the iron mask remains still to be unravelled, we must leave to the reader to determine.

End of the Iron Mask.

THE JEW OF WILNA.

In the advance of the French against Russia, a colonel, strolling in the suburbs of Wilna, heard cries of distress from a house, and entering to ascertain the cause, he found four soldiers engaged in plundering and ill-treating an aged Jew and a young girl. The maurauders, not being willing to relinquish their prey, proceeded to blows; but the colonel, who was an excellent swordsman, laid two of the assailants dead on the spot, and drove the other two from the house severely wounded; he himself received slight wounds, and a ball grazed his cheek. On the return of the remnant of the French army, oppressed with fatigue, want, and disease, the worn-out soldier, in rags sought the dwelling of the Jew, and with difficulty was recognized, so completely changed was his appearance. The Jew completely furnished his wardrobe, and contrived to send him through the hostile armies to France. At the peace, the colonel was obliged to retire on a miserable pittance, which an aged mother and sister shared. He had forgotten the Jew of Wilna, when one evening, in the spring of 1816, a man called at his humble abode in the surburbs of Paris, and having satisfied himself as to his identity, placed in his hands a packet, and vanished. On opening it, the colonel found bills, on a banker in Paris, to the amount of £5000, with the following note:—"He, whose daughter you preserved from the most brutal treatment, whose life you saved, and whose house you protected from plunder at the risk of your existence, sends you an offering of his gratitude: the only return he requires is, if ever you hear the Jews contemned, you will say that one of that race knew how to be grateful". The old Jew died at Vienna; his daughter, the heiress of his immense wealth, the largest portion of which was in the French funds, visited Paris; it was natural she should seek the brave man who had preserved her from the worst of fates, and with no common emotions he found the young girl he had preserved now a blooming and beautiful woman, and grateful as she was engaging. He became a lover, and she consented to be a wife. With her hand he received more than £100,000.

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